

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 06444 201150Z

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W  
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 1235

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T BEIRUT 6444

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE TREAT AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AEMR, LE, PFOR

SUBJECT: BEIRUT EVACUATION: NEW PROPOSAL IN LIGHT OF NEW SITUATION

REF: (A) BEIRUT 6424, (B) STATE 178649, (C) STATE 178394

1. AS I AM REPORTING IN SEPTELS, I HAVE THIS MORNING OBTAINED TWO IMPORTANT CLARIFICATIONS AFFECTWNG OUR EVACUATION WHICH IMPINGE ON EVACUATION PLANNING AT THIS JUNCTURE: (A) I AM SATISFIED, FOLLOWING MEETING WITH EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR (WHO CALLED PLO OFFICIAL IN MY PRESENCE), THAT ARAFAT'S CONCERN REGARDING SECURITY ALONG PROPOSED CONVOY ROUTE IS AUTHENTIC; AND(B) WE FINALLY OBTAINED MARONITE ASSURANCES THAT THEY WILL HOLD THEIR FIRE SHOULD WE DECIDE TO USE AIRPORT.

2.FOREGOING CLARIFICATIONS DO TWO THINGS: (A) FOR FIRST TIME SINCE PASSAGE OF BRITISH CONVOY A MONTH AGO, SECURITY OF NABATIYA LAND ROUTE

IS CALLED INTO QUESTIN; AND (B) WE CAN REVIEW AIRPORT OPTION WITH MORE CONFIDENCE THAT AIRPORT CAN BE SECURED.

3. ACCORDINGLY, I PROPOSE THAT WE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING

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EVACUATION OPTIONS IN DESCENDING ORDER: (A) CHARTER MEA AIRCRAFT;

(B) PROCEED BY LAND CONVOY AS SOON AS PLO GIVES GO-AHEAD;  
(C) INVOKE FLUID DRIVE; AND (D) BRING IN AMERICAN CHARTER AIRCRAFT.

4. I RECOGNIZE EXISTENCE OF INSURANCE GUARANTEE PROBLEM IN CONNECTION WITH CHARTER MEA AIRCRAFT BUT, IN THE DISBELIEF THAT USG CANNOT FIND SOME WAY TO OVERCOME THIS OBSTACLE, USE OF MEA PLANES APPEARS NOW TO BE MOST DESIRABLE MEANS OF EVACUATION. NEW ELEMENT OF PLO CONCERN RE SECURITY ALONG LAND ROUTE SEEMS TO MAKE AIRPORT EVACUATION BY MEA AIRCRAFT A SLIGHTLY LESSER RISK, OR AT LEAST NO RISKIER-WHILE BEING A LOT EASIER.

5. IF, HOWEVER, IT CONTINUES TO BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO CHARTER MEA AIRCRAFT--WHICH ARE ONLY COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT FAMILIAR TO LOCAL SCENE AND UNLIKELY TO CAUSE ANY STIR--THEN OUR SECOND RECOMMENDED OPTION OS TO PROCEED WITH LAND CONVOY, WAITING UNTIL THURSDAY OR FRIDAY ON ASSUMPTION THAT BY THAT TIME PLO WILL HAVE MADE ROUTE THROUGH NABATIYA AS SAFE AS POSSIBLE. (IN ANY CASE, WE ARE HOLDING ALL THE BUSES, SO THEY ARE AVAILABLE FOR USE AT MOMENT'S NOTICE.)

6. IF THURSDAY OR FRIDAY PLO REQUESTS FURTHER POSTPONEMENT (AND MEA AIRCRAFT USE CONTINUES TO BE IMPOSSIBLE, THEN I BELIEVE WE MUST CONSIDER TURNING TO FLUID DRIVE. ALTHOUGH USE OF FLUID DRIVE IN CURRENT POLITICALLY CHARGED ATMOSPHERE IN BEIRUT IS NOT RPT NOT TO BE HIGHLY RECOMMENDED, WITH FULL PLO SUPPORT (OF WHICH I AM CONFIDENT) WE CAN HANDLE IT. THE ADVISABILITY OF EVACUATING PERSONNEL AT THIS JUNCTURE OVERRIDES THE POLITICAL RIPPLES THAT MIGHT FLOW FROM INTRODUCING U.S. MILITARY EVACUATION AIRCRAFT.

7. MY LAST CHOICE WOULD BE TO BRING IN AN AMERICAN CHARTER AIRCRAFT. THIS IS A LITTLE RISKY BECAUSE AN UNFAMILIAR AIRCRAFT TENDS TO RASIE THE RISK OF SOME UNCONTROLLABLE ELEMENT TAKING A POTSHOT. ONLY AIRCRAFT WHOSE MARKINGS ARE FAMILIAR AND ACCEPTABLE HERE AT THIS POINT ARE ICRC AND MEA.

8. I APPRECIATE THE INSURANCE GUARANTEE PROBLEM RE CHARTERING MEA AIRCRAFT, BUT I WOULD NOT RPT NOT RECOMMEND THIS OPTION IF I WERE NOT RPT NOT PRETTY CONFIDENT THAT EVACUATION BY THIS MEANS IS SECURE THE MONETARY RISK TO USG WOULD BE EVEN LESS IF MEA AND OR ITS INSURANCE UNDERWRITERS PROVIDED ROUTINE FLIGHT COVERAGE WITH  
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USG GUARANTEE LIMITED TO LOSS BY GUNFIRE OR HOSTILE ACTION. WE SEEM TO RECALL THAT USG LIMITED GUARANTEE ON THIS BASIS IN MEA EVACUATION CHARTER SEVERAL YEARS AGO.  
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## Message Attributes

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